

ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

LEGERDEMAIN, a science which has raised the admiration of society, is an art, whereby the performer seems to work prodigies and miracles, that are impossible and incredible, by agility and slight of hand. This ingenious art we may with propriety class under four distinct heads, which are as follows :

- 1st, In the conveyance of money.
- 2d, In the conveyance of balls, &c.
- 3d, In cards and dice.
- 4th, In confederacy.

These are the principal parts that the art is generally divided into. The exhibiter must be possessed of great presence of mind, and set a good face upon the matter, even at the worst of times ; he must have a commanding boldness, and be of an undaunted resolution ; he must abundantly put forth strange uncouth and emphatical words, delivered with an occasional distortion of the countenance, at once to grace his actions and to amaze the astonished beholders. He must also use certain gestures of body, totally irrevelent from the subject in hand, in order to take off the attention of the spectators, when any particular part of the performance is about to be exhibited. By so doing he will be better enabled to exhibit his deceptions with coolness to himself, and at the same time with additional plaudits from an admiring audience.

To make one pen-knife out of three jump out of a goblet, agreeably to the option of the company.

Take a silver goblet ; as, on account of its opacity, it will hide the means you will employ to make the pen-knife jump out at the desire of the assembly.

THE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

This operation consists in a small spring, about an inch broad, by two inches and a quarter long.

You are to take care to subject or bend this spring, before you begin the trick, with a little bit of sugar ; which, being compressed between the two ends of the spring, will prevent its unbending.

Then ask the company, shewing your three pen-knives of different colours, which of them they chuse to see jump out of the goblet.

Put afterwards your three pen-knives in the goblet, taking care to lay the end of the handle of the chosen pen-knife in a little round hole that is in the upper end of the spring, confined by the bit of sugar ; and, before you withdraw your hand from the goblet, which must contain in the bottom some drops of water, take a little of it with the tip of your finger, and put it dexterously on the sugar, which by melting will leave the spring at liberty to extend and make the pen-knife jump out.

While the sugar is melting, you may stand far from the goblet, and command the pen-knife to jump out ; and this will be done to the great astonishment of the spectators. Yet nothing is so simple as the means to make this experiment succeed, without the least assistance from any confederate.

The art of fortune-telling by cards.

TAKE a pack of cards ; and, making yourself which queen you please, lay them out on the table, nine of a row ; and, wherever you find yourself placed, count nine cards every way, making yourself one, and then you will see what card you tell to, and whatever that is will happen to you. If the two red tens are by you, it is a sign of marriage ; the ace of diamonds is a ring : the ace of hearts is your house ; the ace of clubs is a letter ; the ace of spades is death, spite, or quarrelling : (for, that is reckoned the worst card in the pack :) the ten of diamonds is a journey ; the three of hearts is a kiss ; the three of spades is tears ; the ten of the same suit is sickness ; the nine of the same is disappointment ; the nine of hearts is feasting ;

THE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

the ten of clubs going by water; the ten of hearts places of amusement; the five of hearts a present; the five of clubs a bundle; the six of spades a child; the seven of spades a removal; the three of clubs fighting; the eight of clubs confusion; the eight of spades a road-way; the four of clubs a strange bed; the nine of diamonds business; the five of diamonds a settlement; the five of spades a surprise; the two red eights new clothes; the three of diamonds speaking with a friend; the four of spades a sick bed; the seven of clubs a prison; the two of spades a false friend; the four of hearts a marriage-bed: when several diamonds come together, it is a sign of money; several hearts love; several clubs drink; and several spades vexation. If a married woman lays the cards, she must make her husband the king of the same suit she is queen of; but, if a single woman tries it, she may make her sweetheart what king she likes; the knaves of the same suit are the men's thoughts: so that you may know what they are thinking, by telling nine cards from where they are placed, making them one; and if any one chooses to try if she shall have her wish, let her shuffle the cards well, (as she must likewise when she tells her fortune,) wishing all the time for some one thing; she must then cut them once, minding what card she cuts, shuffle them again, and then deal them out into three parcels; which done, look over every parcel, and if the card you cut comes next yourself, or next the ace of hearts, you will have your wish; but if the nine of spades is next, you will not, for that is a disappointment; however, you may try it three times.

This method of telling fortunes is innocent, and much better than for a young person to tell their secrets to an old hag of a gipsey fortune-teller, who can inform her no better, if she pays a shilling for the intelligence.—Breslaw.

To make sport and cause mirth with quick-silver.—From Breslaw.

THIS volatile mineral will afford many curious experiments, none of which are more pleasing than the following.

THE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

ing. Boil an egg ; and, while it is hot, make a small hole at one end, then put in a little quicksilver, seal up the hole with sealing-wax, and then leave it on a table, or any where else, when it will not cease to fly about while there is any warmth in it, or till it is broken in pieces.

Another trick with quicksilver, from the same.

An old woman on a Sunday was making dumplings, when two of her grandsons came to see her ; and, being merrily inclined, while her back was turned, conveyed some quicksilver into the dough, and then took their leave. The old woman left the cooking to the care of her granddaughter, and went herself to church, charging her to be careful, and skim the pot, in which was to be boiled the dumplings and a leg of mutton : the girl was very careful to watch when the pot boiled, when taking off the cover out jumped a dumpling, which she instantly put in again, when out flew another, and another after that ; which terrified the girl so much, that she ran with all speed to the church : the old woman seeing her come in, held up her hand, shook her head, winked at her, as much as to say, begone ! At last the girl cried out, before the congregation, “ All your nodding and winking does not signify, for the leg of mutton has beat the dumplings out of the pot.” This caused much laughing ; and her two grandsons, being then on their knees, saw plainly the pleasing effect of their experiment. But to play tricks with quicksilver should be done with great care, as it is very dangerous.

To discover the number of points on 3 cards, placed under 3 different parcels of cards.

You are first to agree that the ace shall tell eleven, the pictured cards ten each, and the others according to their number of points ; as at the game of piquet. Then propose to any one to choose 3 cards, and over them to put as many cards as will make the number of the points of
that

THE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

that card 15. Suppose, for example, he choose a 7, a 10, and an ace : then over the 7 he must place eight cards : over the 10, five cards, and over the ace, four. Take the remainder of the cards, and seeming to look for some card among them, tell how many there are ; and, adding 16 to that number, you will have the number of points on the three cards. As in this instance, where there will remain 12 cards, if you add 16 to that number it will make 28, which is the number of points on the three cards. If this recreation be performed with a pack of quadrille cards, the number added to the remaining cards must be eight.

Several letters that contain no meaning, being wrote upon cards, to make them, after they have been twice shuffled, give an answer to a question that shall be proposed ; as for example, What is Love ?

LET 24 letters be written on as many cards ; which, after they have been twice shuffled, shall give the following answer :

A DREAM OF JOY THAT SOON IS O'ER.

First, write one of the letters in that line on each of the cards. These letters should be written in capitals on one of the corners of each card, that the words may be easily legible when the cards are spread open. Then write the answer on a paper, and assign one of the 24 first numbers to each card, in the following order :

A DREAM OF JOY THAT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

SOON IS O'ER.

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

Next write on another paper a line of numbers, from 1 to 24 ; and, looking in the table for 24 combinations, you will see that the first number after the second shuffle is 21, therefore the card that has the first letter of the answer, which is A, must be placed against that number in the line of numbers you have just made. In like manner the

5

A 3

number

THE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

number 22 being the second in the same column, indicates that the card, which answers to the second letter, D, of the answer, must be placed against that number : and so of the rest. For the same reason, if you would have the answer after one shuffle, the cards must be placed according to the first column of the table : or, if after three shuffles, according to the third column. The cards will then stand in the following order :

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
O	O	F	S	A	M	N	T	O	I	S	R	H	A	E	O	E
18	19	20	21	22	23	24										
J	O	R	A	D	Y	T										

From whence it follows that, after these cards have been twice shuffled, they must infallibly stand in the order of the letters in the answer.

Observe 1. You should have several questions with their answers, consisting of 24 letters, wrote on cards: these cards should be put in cases, and numbered, that you may know to which question each answer belongs. You then present the questions ; and, when any one of them is chosen, you pull out the case that contains the answer, and shewing that the letters wrote on them make no sense, you then shuffle them, and the answer becomes obvious.

2. To make this recreation the more extraordinary, you may have three cards, on each of which an answer is written ; one of which cards must be a little wider, and another a little longer than the others. You give these three cards to any one ; and, when he has privately chosen one of them, he gives you the other two, which you put into your pocket, without looking at them, having discovered, by feeling, which he chose. You then pull out the case, that contains the cards that answer to his question, and perform as before.

3. You may also contrive to have a long card at the bottom, after the second shuffle. The cards may be then cut several times, till you perceive by the touch that the long card is at bottom, and then give the answer ; for, the

THE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

repeated cuttings, however often, will make no alteration in the order of the cards.

The third of these observations may be practised in almost all experiments with the cards. You should take care to put up the cards as soon as the answer has been shewn : so that, if any one should desire the recreation to be repeated, you may offer another question, and pull out those cards that contain the answer.

Though this recreation cannot fail of exciting at all times pleasure and surprize, yet it must be owned, that a great part of the applause it receives arises from the address with which it is performed.

To discover any card in the pack by its weight or smell.

DESIRE any person in company to draw a card from the pack, and when he has looked at it, to return it to you with the face downwards ; then, pretending to weigh it nicely, take notice of any particular mark on the back of the card ; which, having done, put it among the rest of the cards, and desire the person to shuffle as he pleases ; then, giving you the pack, you pretend to weigh each card as before, and proceed in this manner till you have discovered the card he has chosen.

A trick on the cards, called the two convertible aces.

By means of a little soap, fix a heart on the ace of clubs, and a club on the ace of hearts, in such a manner that they will easily slip off. Shew these two aces to the company ; and, taking the ace of clubs in your hand, desire a person to put his foot upon it, and as you place it on the ground, draw away the club in as secret a manner as possible. In like manner place the seeming ace of hearts under the foot of another person. You then command, with as much ceremony as you choose, the two cards to change their places ; and, upon the persons taking up their cards, they will have ocular demonstration that your commands have been obeyed.

THE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

A similar experiment may be practised with the seeming ace of hearts only, as follows : after shewing a person the card, let him hold one end of it at the same time you have hold of the other ; and, while you amuse him by discourse, or some other way, slide off the heart, and then laying the card on the board, with its face downwards, knock under the table, and command it to change to the ace of clubs ; which, upon its being taken up, will be found to be the case.

A curious trick upon the cards, called the ten duplicates.

TAKE twenty cards, and after any one has shuffled them, lay them down by pairs, upon the table, with their faces uppermost.

Then desire several persons to fix their minds on different pairs, and remember of what cards they are composed.

You then take up all the cards in the same order you laid them down ; and place them again, one by one, on the board, according to the order of the letters in the following table ; beginning with the last card, which you will place at the beginning of the first row, the next card you will place so as to stand in the middle of the third row ; the third card the second in the first row, the fourth card the fourth in the same row, the fifth in the middle of this row, the sixth at the end of the second row, and so on.

M	U	T	U	S
D	E	D	I	T
N	O	M	E	N
R	O	R	I	S

Then, by asking each person which row, or rows, the cards he chose are in, you will be able to point them out, by only remembering the words of the above sentence, and the order of the letters of which they are composed.

Thus, for example, if he say they are in the first row, you know that they must be the second and fourth cards, because the letter U occurs twice in that line.

THE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

If he say one is in the second row, and the other in the fourth, they must be the fourth cards of those rows; as is obvious from the recurrence of the letter I; and so of any pair.

A curious method of restoring a fly to life, in two minutes, that has been drowned twenty-four hours.

This wonderful experiment is produced from a very simple cause. Take a fly, put it in a glass or cup full of water; cover it so as to deprive the fly of air. When you perceive it to be quite motionless, take it out and put it on a place exposed to the sun, and cover it with salt: in two minutes it will revive and fly away.

A ring put into a pistol, which is afterwards found in the bill of a dove in a box, which had been before examined and sealed.

One of the company is requested to put his ring into a pistol, which is charged by another of the spectators: an empty box is shewn to the company, and a third person is desired to shut it, who ties it with a ribbon, and seals it. This box is placed on the table in sight of the company; nevertheless, after the pistol is fired, and the box opened, the dove is there found with the very ring in his bill, which had really been put into the pistol.

EXPLANATION.

When the pistol is taken, under pretence of shewing how it is to be managed, that moment the performer avails himself of to smuggle out the ring; it is then conveyed to the confederate, who puts it in the bill of a tame dove; and, by stretching his arm into the interior part of the table, he conducts the bird into the box, the bottom of which has a secret opening. The ribbon, which has been sealed, and surrounds the box, does not prevent its opening, because only part of the bottom opens; and care is taken not to give the ribbon a second turn round

the box, which, by crossing the first, might impede the introduction of the dove.

We shall not here describe the construction of such a box ; first, because it would require many words to explain the simple effects of a groove ; and, secondly, because there is no cabinet-maker, of any ingenuity, who does not of his own, or of the invention of others, know many things of this kind.

In order to make this trick more surprising to those who might suspect the smuggling of the ring, you may do it two ways : that is to say, when you have employed the artifice we have pointed out, you may cause a second pistol to be charged by one of the company, which you first take to pieces, to shew that there is no means of smuggling the ring out of the barrel. In this pistol you put a ring, furnished you by one of the company, who is in confederacy, and has already supplied your confederate with a similar one to put in the dove's bill in case of need.

To pull off any person's shirt without undressing him, or having occasion for a confederate.

This trick requires only dexterity ; and, nevertheless, when I performed it at the Theatre-Royal, in the Hay-market, every one imagined that the person, whom I had tricked out of his shirt, was in a confederacy with me.

The means of performing this trick are the following : only observing that the clothes of the person, whose shirt is to be pulled off, be wide and easy.

Begin by making him pull off his stock, and unbuttoning his shirt at the neck and sleeves, afterwards tie a little string in the button-hole of the left sleeve ; then, passing your hand behind his back, pull the shirt out of his breeches, and slip it over his head ; then, pulling it out before in the same manner, you will leave it on his stomach ; after that, go to the right hand, and pull the

THE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN.

sleeve down, so as to have it all out of the arm : the shirt being then all of a heap, as well in the right sleeve as before the stomach, you are to make use of the little string fastened to the button-hole of the left sleeve, to get back the sleeve that must have slipped up, and to pull the whole shirt out that way.

To hide your way of operating from the person whom you unshirt, and from the assembly, you may cover his head with a lady's cloak, holding a corner of it in your teeth.

In order to be more at your ease, you may mount on a chair, and do the whole operation under the cloak. Such are the means I used when I performed this trick.

The wonderful Well.

Four different coloured seeds, or small comfits, are given to one of the audience to mix together, and throw down the well ; he then is desired to let down the bucket, and name the colour he would have brought up first, and so on till all the colours are separated.

EXPLANATION.

The well is made to take off in the middle, in the lower part of which are four cells to contain the different seeds, which must be filled before the trick is performed, and closed by four valves, similar to the keys of a German flute. Towards the bottom the well is made narrower, so as just to fit the bucket ; which being let down, the performer demands what colour the company chooses to be drawn up first ; and, by touching the lever, the seed required will fall into the bucket.

To make a sixpence seem to fall through a table.

To perform this trick you must have a handkerchief, with a counter the same size as a sixpence, sewed in one corner of it ; take your handkerchief out of your pocket, and ask one of the company to lend you sixpence, which you must seem carefully to wrap up in the midst of the handkerchief ; but, at the same time, keep the sixpence

in the palm of your hand; and, in its stead, wrap the corner that is sewed into the middle of the handkerchief, and bid them feel, and they will believe the sixpence is there which they had lent you; then lay it under a hat, upon the table, take a glass or tea-cup in that hand the sixpence is in, and hold under the table; and, to carry on the deception, knock upon the table three times, making use of such words as "Vad, come quickly, Presto;" at the same time letting the sixpence drop from your hand into the glass; take up the handkerchief and shake it, taking care to hold it by the corner the counter is in; this trick, however easy to perform, seems strange, if done without bungling.

How to put a card in and out of an egg.

To do this wonderful feat, you must have two sticks made both of one bigness, and both of a likeness, so that no person can know one from the other; one of these sticks must be made so artificially as to conceal a card in the middle, as thus: you must have one of your sticks turned hollow quite through; and then an artificial spring to throw the card in the egg at your pleasure. The operation is thus: take and peel any card in the pack, which you please, and so roll it up, and then put it into your false stick, and there let it be till you have occasion to make use of it; then take a pack of cards, and let any body draw a card, but be sure let it be the same sort of card that you have in the stick already; then let them put it in the pack again, and when you are shuffling them, let that card fall into your lap which the party drew; so, calling for some eggs, desire the party that drew the card, or any other person in the company, to chuse any one of these eggs; and, when they have chosen one, ask them if there be any thing in it, and they will answer, No; then take the egg in your left hand, and the false stick in your right, and so break the egg with your stick; then let the spring go, and the card will appear in the egg, very amazing to the beholders; then conceal that stick, and produce the true one upon the table.